

The Collins Mausoleum # 3

The Caretaker's Comments

By Joe Escobar

Well, here it is! The third issue of **The Collins Mausoleum**! It's much later than I'd ever expected it would be! This illustrates one of the reasons why I preferred to offer this free, via electronic sources. Had I charged for subscriptions, I'd probably have people thinking I'd absconded with their money! Pressures at work and family commitments are the main reasons for the long gap between issues 2 and 3. I also got sidetracked with a writing project.

This issue is dedicated to all the fans past and present who kept the spirit of **Dark Shadows** alive by expressing themselves creatively. Our cover is from one of the early fanzines, **The Crypt**. This publication was edited by Dee Gurnett circa 1970.

Daphne Ashbrook graciously consented to an interview. Daphne is proof that the spirit of **Dark Shadows** is alive and well. A newcomer to DS, she portrayed the tragically menacing Charlotte Howell in the **Book of Temptation** CD. I am embarrassed that it has taken so long for this piece to come to light.

I am also indebted to contributors Geoffrey Hamell and Susan Ramskill. Both of these wonderful writers came through for me with excellent pieces to help me round out this issue.

I am tentatively planning a fourth issue. If this zine is to continue however, it will need input from more people. I always welcome fan fiction, articles, photos, and artwork. If it's to continue beyond another issue or two we'll need submissions from you, the readers.

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Mein Name Ist Victoria Winters By Joe Escobar

Issue one reported on the German versions of the Marilyn “Dan” Ross **Dark Shadows** novels. These were translated and reprinted under the umbrella title “Barnabas der Vampir” in the pulp magazine **Vampir Horror Roman**. What I did not know then was that four of the early novels featuring Victoria Winters also saw publication in Germany in **Gaslicht** (Gaslight), the sister publication of **Vampir Horror Roman**.

I would surmise that the publisher Pabel/Moewig was testing the waters when the decision was made to publish one of the Ross novels in each of its magazines. **Dark Shadows** was offered as a straightforward gothic romance. Although this is the only issue for which I was unable to obtain a cover image, perusals of other examples of the **Gaslicht** series reveal them to be virtually indistinguishable from the stereotypical image of a gothic romance novel. It most likely had a wholesomely beautiful heroine running or standing in the shadow of a bleak and sinister looking manor.

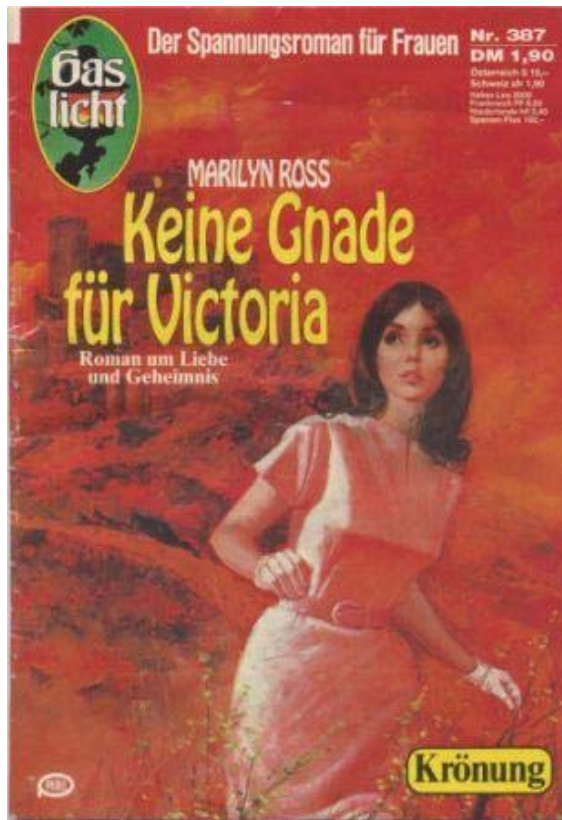
Barnabas Collins and the Mysterious Ghost was published soon after **Dark Shadows** in **Vampir Horror Roman**. In German the title was changed to **The Vampire and the Dancer**. Unlike later offerings, the subtitle “Barnabas der Vampir” was not used. The cover reveals a vampire that is suave and sophisticated, clothed in a tuxedo, and dancing with a ballerina. This is in sharp contrast to the hideous, menacing interpretation revealed by the art in the 9 editions that bore the “Barnabas der Vampir” moniker.

Judging from the publishing history neither was an immediate success. **Dark Shadows** was published in 1973 and **Barnabas Collins and the Mysterious Ghost** in 1974. **Gaslicht** did not publish another Victoria Winters novel until 1977. **Vampir Horror Roman** followed suit with **Barnabas Collins** in the same year. **Vampir Horror Roman** then followed up with 8 more of the Ross novels featuring Barnabas, ten in all. The **Gaslicht** publication waited four more years before offering another Victoria Winters book.

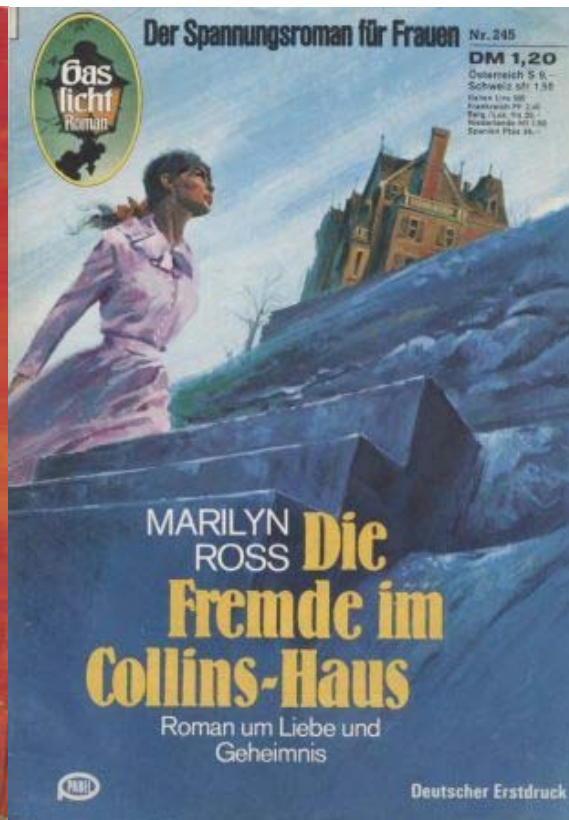
In 1981 **Victoria Winters** and **Strangers at Collins House** were released. It is interesting that Victoria is depicted differently in each of the three covers I’ve found. Barnabas is drawn consistently in all of the **Vampir Horror Roman** offerings, with the exception of **Barnabas Collins and the Mysterious Ghost**. In contrast, Vickie appears in three different guises, varying between blonde and brunette. Apparently each was viewed as a standalone novel and not as part of a subseries as the Barnabas novels were.

The Curse of Collinwood was not issued in Germany. It seems likely that it was deemed too supernatural for the gothic romance series and the absence of Barnabas made it unsuitable for the vampire title.

So there you have it, 14 Ross novels in all were translated and distributed overseas. Searches on EBay have revealed that some of the Victoria Winters novels were reprinted in omnibus collections of assorted romance titles. It’s significant that I’ve never seen them all collected together, implying that there is little or no name recognition of the character. **Barnabas Collins** is the sole repeat in their Barnabas series. It was offered in 1991, perhaps spurred on by the production of NBC’s **Dark Shadows**. I’ve seen no evidence of an attempt at marketing the any of the Victoria Winters novels since 1981. It seems that while Barnabas Collins managed to make a modest wave in the German consciousness, Victoria was barely able to make a ripple.



Victoria Winters



Strangers at Collins House



The Mystery of Collinwood



Barnabas, Quentin, and the Haunted Cave

An Interview with Alexandra Moltke

Transcribed by Joe Escobar

This interview was conducted by an anonymous fan. I purchased the tape on EBay and am providing as accurate a transcript as I can. Parts of the tape are nearly unintelligible, and I'm making educated guesses about what's being said. I'm omitting portions that are too garbled for me to confidently relate what was said. The interviewer obviously sent her a list of questions. She restated the query and then recorded her response on a cassette recorder. The tape does not bear a date, but it was probably recorded circa 1978, based on the allusion to Thayer David's death, which seemed to be fairly recent. I am indebted to the interviewer who was also a fanzine editor.

How did you get the role of Victoria?

I got it through an agent, and I was told I was the only innocent looking actress in New York, and that's how I got the part. I had a screen test, and I was told I looked like Joan Bennett. That added a whole new element to the story. I was supposed to be her illegitimate daughter, I guess, I don't even remember.

What did you enjoy most about **Dark Shadows**?

I enjoyed working on a show that had so much imagination. *The next portion of the tape is garbled. She alludes to enjoying the craziness and the humor.*

What are your feelings about **Dark Shadows**?

Well, I'm very sorry that it went off the air. There's nothing on at that time of day that will stretch people's imaginations the way that show did. It was real fantasy escape. *A garbled portion leads into her amazement that so many people "got a lot out of the show. It's surprising; I'm sure that they must miss it."*

Who do you admire from the show?

Joan Bennett. She was, or is, very professional. And she always kept her good humor when things were disorganized, as you can imagine in a show with all those special effects. She was always self disciplined and set a good example for the rest of us.

Who was your favorite character?

There were so many! I suppose the Barnabas character. And then there was the Frankenstein one. I loved Thayer's characters. Anything Thayer played he made very special. You see that's a good point. *There is a garbled phrase.* Clarice Blackburn was wonderful as the housekeeper. She made that character more memorable than some of the characters that were on a more steady basis.

Do you recall any bloopers?

Well yes, quite a few! I remember one that had to be retaped; it was so bad. There was one day when there were two actors who were, shall we say, under the weather! They were doing a scene together, and they hadn't bothered to memorize their lines. They probably decided to wing it with the TelePrompter. So we were taping and they were going along reading their lines off of the TelePrompter. One of them realized he was reading the other actor's lines. The other actor was reading the opposite man's lines! And they just had to cut! That was fun. . It made no sense whatsoever. And of course those of us standing off in

the wings, we couldn't (*stop laughing*); I mean they must have thought there were bats giggling in the background, because we couldn't keep quiet.

Why weren't you in the full run of **Dark Shadows**?

The first sentence is garbled. She makes reference to "an act of God". In my case it meant that I was pregnant. I had some very heavy things to do. I had to get hanged I think, I just can't remember. I wasn't having a very easy time with the pregnancy so I had to get out legally from my contract because they didn't seem to be wanting to let me out. As a matter of fact Rosemary's Baby had just come out at that time and I was terrified that they'd keep me in all the way through.

Were you discouraged when **Dark Shadows** was cancelled?

Yes I certainly was! There is a garbled sentence. It was such a whacky, mad show. Nobody else had ever taken chances like that. I think it's mostly to Dan Curtis' credit. He was responsible for it, and I miss it. *There is an extensive garbled portion in which she discusses the show's appeal.*

Do you keep in contact with any of the people from the show?

I see Nancy Barrett and Joan Bennett. Once in a while I run into Louis Edmonds. I saw Donna McKechnie last night. That's about all I can think of.

How did you get into acting?

It was an outlet for me. In my junior year of school I got in a lot of trouble, for what I can't remember, but anyway I was kicked out of the play that we were doing which was *The Madwoman of Chaillot* (the title was garbled, but I'm fairly certain that was what she said). I was sad about that, but I realized how much I really wanted to be an actress. (Garbled phrase) and then I went to acting school after that. An agent came to the acting school where I was and picked me out of the play.

What else have you done besides **Dark Shadows**?

The garbled response alludes to specials, including "Certain Honorable Men" in which she mentions that she appeared with Van Heflin, Peter Fonda, and Will Geer. She also talks a bit about on and off Broadway Theater in New York. Most of the titles were unintelligible, but she did bring up "Alice in Wonderland" and "A Palpable God".

Who are your favorite actors of today?

I don't have one. I like Laurence Olivier, and actresses (garbled), Joan Alexander, uh, who else? Maggie Smith. Glenda Jackson, I'm sure there are a lot more that I'm forgetting.

Could you tell us what a day on the set was like?

The beginning of this answer is garbled. She alludes to coffee. Most of us didn't know our lines the night before, so we would try to bluff our way through it. It was much like going to school when you hadn't done your homework. Again I was unable to transcribe her answer word for word. She made mention of blocking upstairs and picking up from work done the night before. This lasted about "an hour and a half or so". Then we went to makeup and hair. We had a crazy hair lady named Irene. She was a lot of laughs. Vinnie the makeup man was very nice. The wardrobe person's name was garbled; it did not sound like she named June Puleo, and she would stuff me into whatever I needed to be stuffed into. We never had a lunch break. I think that, makeup was our lunch break. Another garbled section describes "the mammoth gray studio" and John Devoe placing tape for the actor's marks, so they would know where to stand and the cameraman could keep them in the shot and in focus. That took a long time. There were three cameras, and they had to figure out what they were doing and not crash into each other. And if we had special effects, forget about

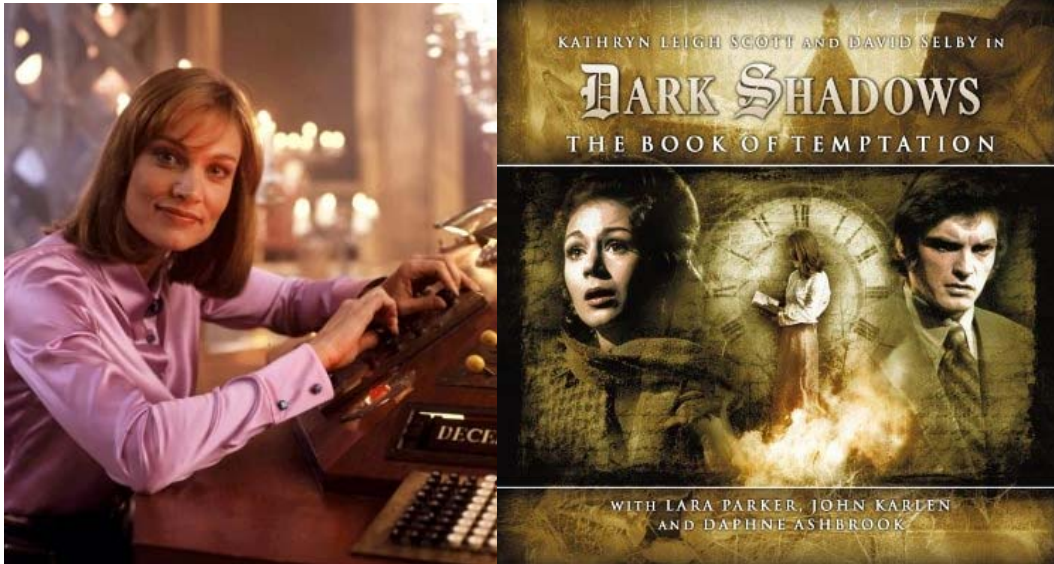
rehearsing, because that took a lot of time! We had a run through, a dress rehearsal, and then we'd tape. I was nervous every day, because although it wasn't live it was treated as though it were live. We would not go back and retape. I was very nearsighted, and I couldn't even see the TelePrompter. And it seemed like everybody in the cast was nearsighted. That faraway look Barnabas used to get was actually desperate searching for the TelePrompter. So a whole other personality developed out of that. People thought he was a lost and unhappy, well meaning vampire, when in fact when he first started, he was not supposed to be that at all. Louis Edmonds was very lucky because he often got to pour himself a brandy. The bar was near the TelePrompter. Then we had about a half hour break. You could go home if you weren't in the next day's show. And we'd start it again. The day ran from about 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM. That's quite a long day sitting on concrete floors with no fresh air. It was quite tiring.

What kind of work (i.e. acting) do you prefer?

I like plays. I think if you have a good company, it's fantastic. It's a comfortable family experience. The longest play I was in was five months, and that was just fine. It takes a quite a while to get into a character, which you wouldn't think. I mean you just rehearse and then do it. But to really refine things, to get the fine points of the personality, you need to bounce off of other actors too. So, I like plays, very much, the sound of the audience when they are paying attention. You don't get that in television. Once in a while the crew will be very quiet, which is very rare. Sometimes they'll give you a hand. That's really quite extraordinary, that's *better* (?) than audience applause. But I like the hours of the theater. I don't like to get up in the morning, and I like to stay up late at night, so that's good. There's something magical about the theater. I don't know what it is, the line of demarcation between the actor and the audience, very, very subtle. *Again the audio is hard to follow. She refers to a strike that's affecting live theater in New York and she expresses a hope that "things will pick up". She goes on to compliment the interviewer on the quality of his magazine. She was amazed at the number of fanzines that have sprung up in response to Dark Shadows. She attributes the phenomenon to the fact that "it was such a unique show".*

I hope that something like it will come on the air, because there seems to be such a need for it. Here in New York there are endless vampire plays, and I think there are several vampire movies coming out. Oh I recommend a book called Interview with the Vampire, to anyone that hasn't read it. It's fantastic! And it's got Dark Shadows beat by a mile, but it's not funny. It doesn't have that going for it. I wish you luck on the magazine. I'm looking forward to the issue on Thayer. I was so I was so sorry that he died. I was a great fan of Thayer's, and he was quite a friend.





An Interview with Daphne Ashbrook

By Joe Escobar

CM-You were raised with a heavy background in live theater; both parents were actors; you won an award for playing Shakespeare's daughter at age 8. Most of your work as an adult has been either for TV or film. How did your stage background prepare you for your work in the film medium?

DA-Well, I tend to believe acting is acting. So, I learned to develop characters and how to sustain a character throughout a 2 to 2 ½ hour play. That means really being committed and knowing who you are as you move through a play. That certainly helped me in film work. The characters in film are not much different just because they are on film. The demands are different on the actor – the important part – the acting, is essentially the same. Also, and probably most importantly – doing a lot of theatre as I grew up – gave me a lot of confidence. Sometimes I think that matters more than anything.

CM-Were there habits or techniques you had to unlearn?

DA-A good habit I learned from doing theatre, that subsequently my film work – was doing a lot of homework. Be ready when you step on the set/stage. Don't make everybody else – do your homework for you.

CM-Was it difficult to adjust to the lack of a live audience?

DA-It took some getting used to. But it didn't take too long. Although, if you do your job right, the crew does become an audience – and I have to say, a few of the most touching moments in my career, was when the crew clapped after a scene. They are some of the hardest audiences out there!

CM-You are the only actor who has worked on a **Star Trek** series, **Doctor Who**, and a **Dark Shadows** production. Were you a fan of any of these shows when you were growing up? Are there any interesting memories or anecdotes you might have regarding any of these shows? (Since this interview was conducted David Warner also made that triple play. Daphne is still the only actress to be a part of all 3 shows.)

DA-I hate to tell – I never saw Dark Shadows – until recently. It was such a kick. I was a HUGE fan of Star Trek – and watched whenever it was on. Doctor Who – like Dark Shadows – was new to me and I have subsequently seen many of the old episodes – and watch the new one when ever I can.

CM-Are you a fan of science fiction and/or gothic horror? If so, who are your favorite authors, movies, shows, etc?

DA- I do, however love science fiction, and have been interested in the whole alien thing for a very long time. I have also done a fair amount of research, as the years have progressed.

CM-What can you tell us about your **Falcon Crest** characters and the episodes you were in? Did you work with David Selby on the show? If so, are there any anecdotes you can share

DA-Falcon Crest – the first time I was on it – was when I worked with David. I have strong memories of him – not so much about the show. He was fantastic! A real gentleman! I loved working with him!!

CM-You played an alien on an episode of **Star Trek: Deep Space Nine**. Melora was from a low gravity world and had to be confined to either a wheel chair or hobble around the station with a cane. Did this role give you any insights into what it is like to live with a physical challenge?

DA-I actually was given a wheelchair to practice (during another show I did) over a week end. I took the chair out with me in public and was amazed at how people reacted to me. People don't like to even LOOK at a person in a chair, let alone converse with them. I have been in a chair 3 times over the years for different parts I have played, and let me tell you, it's tough. I have a huge amount of respect for the people confined to them. We take so much for granted in this world!

CM-Were the low gravity scenes difficult? Was a stunt person utilized extensively?

DA-The stunt person was used a fair amount. I wanted to do all the flipping stuff – didn't I flip around in the air? – Or am I just remembering a dream? Anyway, the harness wasn't very comfortable and I didn't think it did much for my figure either. ☺

CM-Have you received much fan feedback from your work on that episode?

DA-I did when it aired and I still get some on occasion.

CM-Was the possibility of her return ever discussed?

DA-At that time the technology made it financially unfeasible. But today – it would be a walk in the park.

CM-Are you aware that Melora has become an ongoing character in the **Star Trek Titan** books?

DA-No I did not! Well! Does she fly??

CM-I'm not sure to be honest! I'd guess they work the low gravity aspect in when the story calls for it. You worked with Dan Curtis in **The Love Letter**. Can you discuss your role in this production and your work with Mr. Curtis?

DA-Actually, that was the second time I had worked with Dan. I loved that man. The first thing I did with him was a mini-series called Intruders, where I played an abductee. It was a grueling shoot, but a great role. Then Dan cast me in the Hallmark Movie The Love Letter. I loved that show. Two people fall in love but they are kept apart by time. Not unlike Somewhere in Time with Chris Reeve. It was a great shoot – I'm a huge fan of Campbell Scott, so it was like a dream. But Dan was like a father to me. I was very sad when he passed.

CM-When you were contacted to do the **Doctor Who** pilot, were you aware of the extent of the fan following for the series? Was there any trepidation about being cast in a program that had become an icon?

DA-I was blissfully ignorant.

CM-Were you aware of the extent of the fan following? How did fans react to “THE KISS” between Grace and the Doctor?

DA-Again, blissfully ignorant. But I did a little research later. I was stunned. But I think they’ve forgiven me – since they seem to like that idea a lot in the new series.

CM-You worked with Big Finish Productions on an audio Doctor Who story called “The Next Life”. This time you played another character named Perfection. Did you find it challenging or daunting to have to adjust to the audio only medium?

DA-I was rather terrified. I had never done one of these things before. I hadn’t seen Paul in years and I was totally jet lagged. I mean really JET LAGGED. But I jumped in and LOVED working with Gary Russell who has become a great friend of mine.

CM-Were you able to pick up from where you left off with working with Paul McGann?

DA-Funnily, we did just pick up where we left off. It was weird. We had the same banter and laughed a lot. It’s strange how that works like that with some people. I love Paul!

CM-Perfection seems a bit more complicated than Grace. At first she seems to be heroic, if a bit absent minded and helpless. When playing those scenes, did you try to inject a subtext to foreshadow the revelation that she’s actually one of the villains?

DA-I am sorry, but I remember so little of that trip – I didn’t know which end was up. All I did was jump in – head first – and did what Gary told me to do. Then I crossed my fingers. I’ve never heard it. Was it any good?

CM-If you had the choice, which character would you rather play again, Grace or Perfection?

DA-Grace.

CM-You worked for Big Finish again on **Dark Shadows: The Book of Temptation.**

DA-Yes. A great chance to work with Gary and David again.

CM-How did you interpret your character, Charlotte Howell; was she evil, tortured or trapped? Was she just a victim of the book or has she been co-opted by it?

DA-Probably a mix of all those things. It’s probably my fault that you couldn’t tell from the performance.

CM-What background, if any were you given about the character?

DA-I wasn’t given much background or time to prepare – again it was a trust your instincts and be unafraid kind of jobs. Not much help am I?

CM-Was your portrayal influenced or shaped to any great degree by the director or were you given free rein to interpret her as you chose?

DA-Gary always gave me freedom to bring what I could to with it. But Gary also gave me whatever help I needed.

CM-Can you describe the atmosphere surrounding the recording sessions?

DA-They are pretty casual. The people are all there to have fun, but also get the job done. It’s so wonderful not to have to worry about what you look like! I LOVE that part. David and I hung out in the green room and we all chatted and nibbled on whatever was left around. Swapped stories and reminisced. Lots of fun.

CM-Thank you for your time! This was a very informative and interesting interview!

DA- I thank you for your interest and support! You’re a gem!!

Currents in Classic Dark Shadows Fan Fiction
(As Viewed Through a Pompous Literary Aesthetic)
By Susan Ramskill

“Never has so much been written by so many for so few...”

Christopher Morley’s wry observation about the apocrypha penned by fans of detective Sherlock Holmes is also apropos of **Dark Shadows** fan fiction. For, if sheer quantity of words is any indicator, **Dark Shadows** must be one of the most popular of fandoms. Habitues of DS festivals have seen stacks of stapled or comb-bound publications for sale in the dealer’s room. Even a cursory look to the internet reveals web sites with dozens of fan-authored DS stories. Some fanzine editors appear to have made a nice sideline of publishing this narrow-audience press; indeed, some DS fanzines are more literary magazine than cast news bulletin.

And, despite the surfeit of product, the quality has been surprisingly high.

Fan writings played a key role in even the earliest DS-oriented publications. Fanfic simultaneously satisfied an individual fan’s creative urge and filled a few pages, always an important consideration for any newsletter editor. But beginning in the mid-1980s, there was a remarkable explosion of DS-oriented fiction, published in stand-alone formats by ambitious fanzine editors who wanted to provide a forum for the DS novels and novellas that were too long for their ‘zines. This glut of stories led to a kind of fanfic High Renaissance, ultimately affording a refreshing re-imagining of familiar characters.

The foremost development in this wave of DS fanfic was the over-throw of the Victoria Winters-Maggie Evans-type ingénue in favor of the sophisticated, intelligent professional woman – well, in a word, Julia Hoffman. The re-drawing of Julia as the partner of Barnabas (intellectually as well as connubially) mirrored contemporary sensibilities about the sexes. Presenting her as sexually desirable, too, surely vindicated the aspirations of working women to be both an autonomous character in her own right *and* an object of desire. Now we could not only get the satisfaction of Julia’s unrequited love for Barnabas finally “-quited,” but even get occasional hints that Julia had a worthwhile existence apart from Barnabas. Julia’s rise in fanfic inescapably made clear that she had become a vehicle of self-validation for many fanfic writers and readers.

Carol Maschke’s Shadowed Beginnings (1988, Pentagram Press, cover art by Anne Marie Erental) was a compelling realization of the re-imagined Julia Hoffman. Maschke expanded the characters (primarily Barnabas and Julia) in a manner that seemed plausible and within the framework of the series. Although considerably heavier on romance than on the supernatural, the author seamlessly integrated pivotal flashbacks (detours to the supernatural element) to the plot and sustained the high emotional pitch characteristic of the series. All in all, it was convincing and well-executed.

Taking the notion of liberating Julia even further, Lori Paige and Jane Lach jointly crafted the superb Tales of Hoffman in 1988 (Lone Gull Press, cover art by Jane Lach). This series of short stories create, mosaic-style, a meticulous biography of Julia Hoffman. Most of the stories take place before her arrival in Collinsport, but each reveals fascinating and plausible back-story. My own favorite of the stories, “Once in a Lifetime,” deals with her medical school friendships with the chivalrous-but-clueless Dave Woodard and a mysterious colleague who is experimenting with organ transplantation. While organ transplantation is routine now, by keeping to the original time arc of the series, Paige/Lach are able to play up the Frankenstein-ish aspect. The story

raises creeps while displaying Julia's emerging professional ability and determination. A concluding story by Lach, "Transitions," presents an optimistic glimpse of Barnabas and Julia in the year 1990, but ends with a literary "stinger" that suggests the inevitable return of evil to haunt a new generation of Collinses.

Predictably, as Julia's stock rose with this new wave of DS fiction, that of the softer, ultra-feminine Josette stand-ins went into eclipse. Dale Clark, longtime publisher of the Inside the Old House fanzine, nonetheless centered his Reunion series of novels on Victoria Winters, and in doing so maintained a vital and authentic link to the TV show. Rather than seeing the character of the frightened ingénue as anachronism, Clark used the normalcy of Vicki Winters to mediate the spooky goings-on at Collinwood. Clark wisely perceived that a "normal" character in the foreground accentuates the oddness of the Collins family. His series of novels -- though intricately plotted to connect, each nicely stands alone -- trade on one word titles, beginning with the letters "R" or "D": Reunion, Retribution, Revelations, Destiny, Disaster, and Damnation.

Some fan authors maintained the ingénue character in their DS writings, simply substituting Julia for Victoria Winters or Josette Du Pres or Maggie Evans. The downside to this technique was that it seemed to perpetuate a sense of Gothic misogyny by giving only a cursory nod to the real differences between the women. While these "Julia in jeopardy" stories may permit Barnabas to be heroic, they foster an unattractive (and ultimately unbelievable) passiveness to Julia.

It was inevitable that the titillation of "bodice rippers" should somehow be incorporated into DS fanfic. Evidently, even fictional vampires become a little randy after the first couple of decades. It's probably best not to cite individual texts here, just note a growing number of bedroom scenes in **Dark Shadows** fanfic. This trend is probably attributable to a more sexually liberated sensibility among fans, and, arguably, their own libidos may have been worked into the fiction they wrote.

Fan fiction often gave a major spotlight to minor characters from the show. M. J. Reid's engaging short story "Family of the Bride," published in The World of Dark Shadows fanzine (#81-84), featured Magda in a pivotal role and was so effective that you realize that the series never truly exploited the gypsy's possibilities. Andy Nunez, a frequent fiction contributor to Dale Clark's Inside the Old House, illuminated characters such as Nicholas Blair and Philip Todd, but his stand-out effort focused on Amadeus Collins. "English Shadows," from the anthology In the Shadows (Old House Publishing) was a riveting scenario in which young Amadeus encounters Miranda DuVal on an English field of battle in 1685.

Angelique has rarely been used effectively in a literary format, notwithstanding Lara Parker's own noteworthy efforts. Perhaps her character was tarnished by the realization that, all in all, she seemed about as supernaturally competent as Bewitched's Aunt Clara. Still, Beginnings: Island of Ghosts (by Kathleen Resch and Marcy Robin, Pentagram Press) is a worthy *Bildungsroman* for the witch, giving her agency denied her in the show.

The literary Barnabas is very difficult to write well. The sheer goodness of character that the show's final years foisted on him diluted the inner conflict that made him such a compelling character. Writing him in the first-person voice often comes across as self-piteous; on the other hand, a third-person depiction of Barnabas is too sterile. No doubt, Barnabas is best when presented as *The Other*, as an object of awe. The very best Barnabas stories I've run across are those that show him prior to the events of 1797, when he is a perceptive but still callow youth, or those in which he is mediated through another character. Of the former type, Decades: 1760-

____ (1982, Pentagram Press, cover art by Barbara Fister-Liltz) is an evocative anthology of stories by various authors that flesh out pivotal moments in Barnabas' life (and *afterlife*).

Lori Paige's The Year the Fire Came (1985, Pentagram Press) re-figured the romantic rivalry between young Barnabas and Jeremiah with Laura the Phoenix as the nexus of their passion. Paige introduced vivid new characters in this story and even successfully incorporated a werewolf. Beautifully executed throughout, The Year the Fire Came has a climatic battle scene so thrilling and eerily moving that it sticks with a reader long after. An extra bonus, this novel was enhanced within by illustrations by Cindy Jorgensen, using a wood block print style deliberately evocative of the late 1700s.

Stories in which Barnabas is mediated through another character are uniquely effective because this technique maintains the mystery of the man, imparting a sense of awe as we see others observe and react to him. It "others" Barnabas while maintaining intimacy via his relationship with Willie, Julia, Josette, et al. There are a great number of effective "Barnabas and (fill in the blank)" stories, but I've found no author does it better than Sharon Wisdom. In The Lesser Light, a novella published in installments in The World of Dark Shadows fanzine, she inverted the familiar master-servant relationship between them, presenting Willie as William, a polished, calculating vampire returned to Collinsport to stalk his former employer, the now-human Barnabas. Wisdom crafted another terrific, "alternate world" tale in Love's Pale Shadow, under the Lone Gull Press emblem in 1993. This *turnabout-is-fair-play* story depicts Julia falling in love with another vampire, one far older and more in tune with his preternatural abilities than Barnabas. Julia embraces the lifestyle and there's a supremely satisfying moment when she and Barnabas confront each other again, many years later, and Barnabas gets an overdue emotional comeuppance. Significantly, Love's Pale Shadow adopted a new attitude toward vampirism – that a cure was not necessarily desirable, that it could be humanely managed. This theme seemed to presage a similar theme in books by Anne Rice and Stephanie Meyer's Twilight saga.

Fandom literary crossovers are very difficult to do well. After all, they rely on reader fluency in two distinct fantasy worlds, sometimes at seeming opposition to each other. If not done purposefully and with a keen appreciation of the reader, these crossovers can fall as flat as a one-joke story. A popular and recurrent theme was juxtaposing the Collinses with the leading characters from a late-80s sci-fi show called "Quantum Leap." Such stories were adroitly handled by several fan-writers, most notably by M.J. Reid, who not only tightly wove the characters together but managed to sustain the story through a long serialization in the fanzine TWODS. Another imaginative migration between shows occurred when Spike and Drusilla, the delightfully angst-free vampire foes of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, found themselves in Collinsport, reacting to the weird Collinses.

Rebirth of the Undead, by Elwood Beaty and D.L. Crabtree (1984, Pentagram Press), is certainly among the best of the crossover category. That some author would think to entwine the Dracula legend with the denizens of Collinsport seems rather obvious, but Beaty and Crabtree made this an engrossing tale of how Barnabas and Dracula come to play on the same team to save Collinwood from the devil incarnate. The preliminaries, set in exotic Egypt and Rumania, seemed to go on for a long bit (perhaps too long), but this novel rewards patience with an exciting and vivid dénouement.

The advent of web publishing has taken much of the financial sting out of self-publishing, so there is a profusion of electronic texts available for **Dark Shadows**. The web site www.fanfiction.net/tv/Dark_Shadows will give you a good introduction to recent DS writings.

Dark Shadows' return to wide syndication in the 1980s-90s reintroduced beloved characters to former fans and created new fans. This latter demographic, I believe, contributed most to such fanfic changes as fandom crossovers, the literary empowerment of heretofore minor characters, a growing feminist sensitivity, and even attempts at DS-based literary erotica.

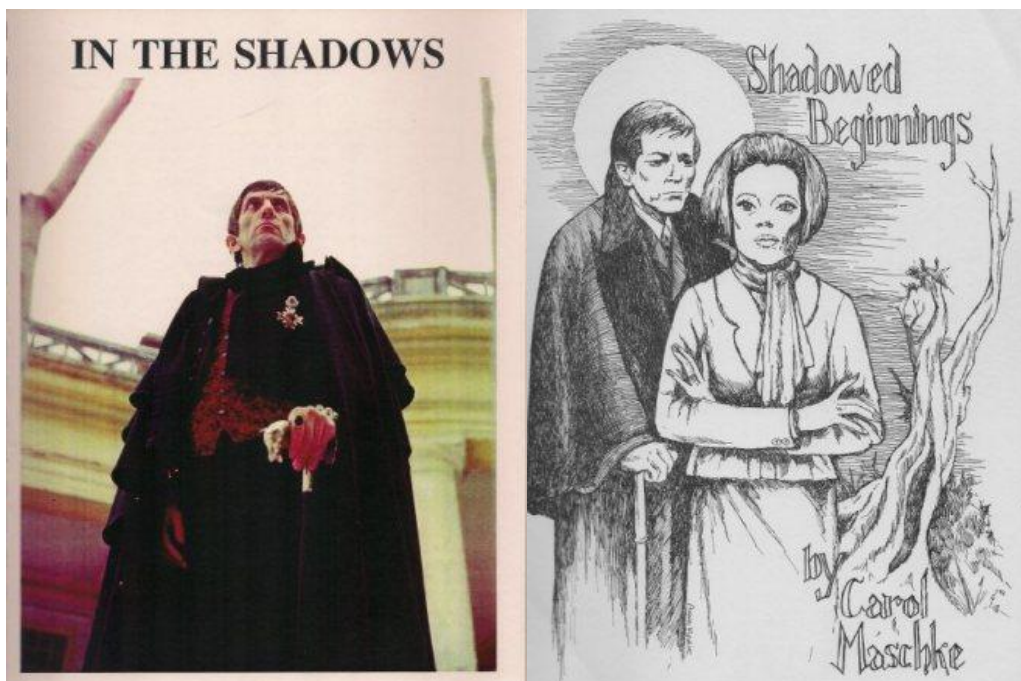
This survey has necessarily made broad generalizations; no doubt I've also made significant omissions, for which I apologize in advance. But it is an indication that there is a truly rich literature available by and for **Dark Shadows** fans. While not as formal and often not as polished as the Dan/Marilyn Ross novels, fanfic is considerably more original. In any event, DS fanfic is always enjoyable for being the *vox populi* of DS fans.

Some of the hard copy novels and novellas cited may be out of print, but below are the last known sources for them.

Lone Gull Press
162 Northwood Apts.
Sunderland MA 01375

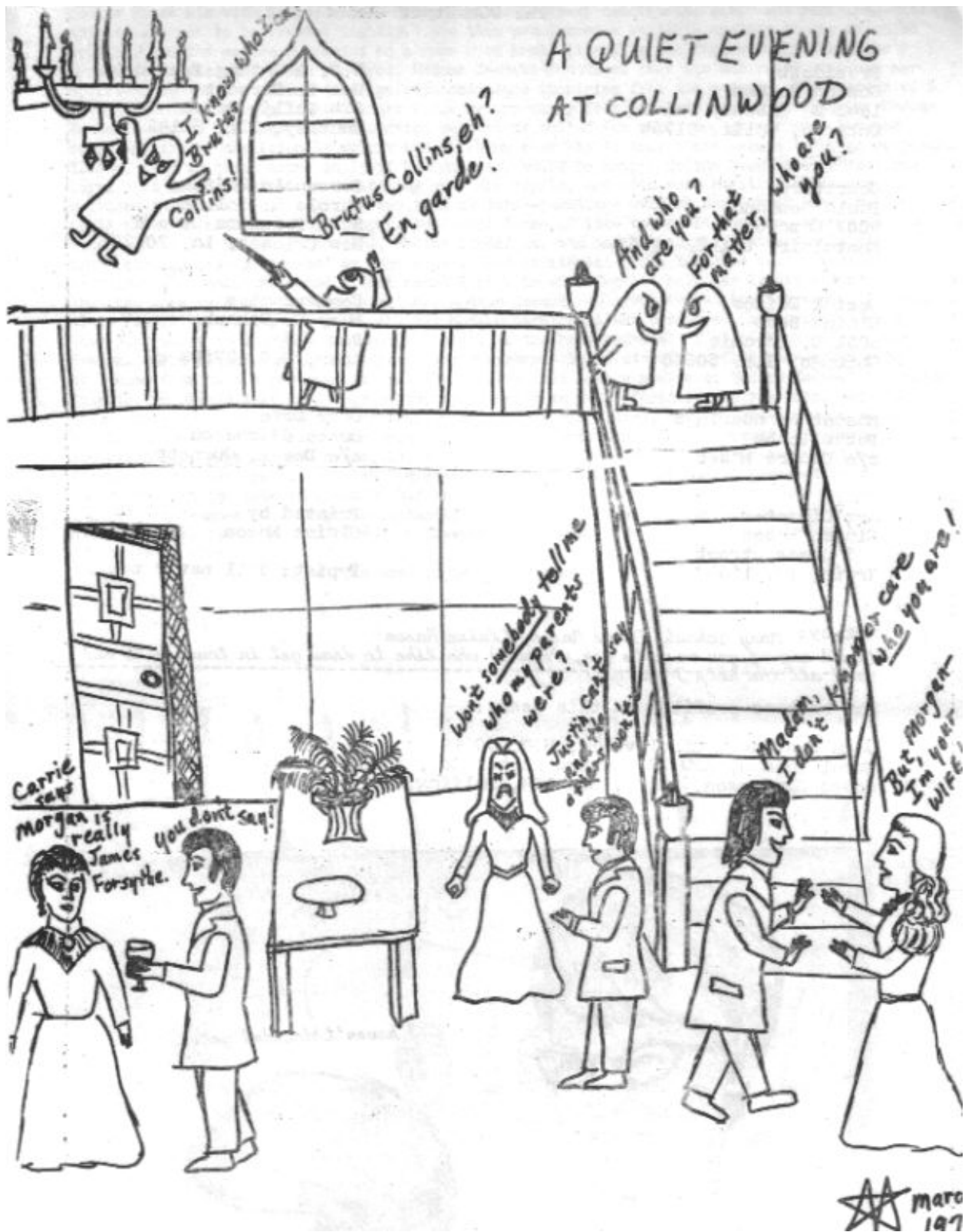
Old House Publishing
10142 Estacado Dr
Dallas TX 75228

Pentagram Press
PO Box 1766
Temple City, CA 91780
Or online under "Zine Shop" at <http://www.hermit.org/Blakes7>



CRYPT 8





Terms of Agreement

By Geoffrey A. Hamell

The little man shook his head, as if amazed at himself. "I really shouldn't do this at all," he said. "But I have done it before, and I'm afraid I will probably do it again. I suppose I'm just a hopeless romantic."

"And you did promise," the young woman pointed out. "Whatever else you are, I'm sure you are a gentleman."

He smiled. "Why, thank you, my dear. You'd be amazed at how rarely *I* receive compliments." His manner became businesslike. "Very well. Let us say that we have a contract. Please remember that the terms of that contract are quite explicit:

"You have the rest of what should have been your natural lifespan to find your Quentin Collins and confirm that he does, indeed, still love you. If he says that, in so many words, then the two of you will have a long, full life together."

"He will love me! I know he will! He must!"

"Let us hope so," Mr. Best said sternly. "But if you find that he does not, then I advise you to settle any other affairs promptly --- for from that moment I shall begin to reclaim you."

"If Quentin doesn't love me," she said soberly, "I'll be ready to go with you."

"Splendid." He smiled again, making a gallant little bow. "I'll look forward to seeing you again, Joanna Mills --- sooner or later."

After she was gone, he tapped the service bell. In a moment a young bellboy appeared from the shadows. "You rang, Mr. B?" he asked cheerfully.

"Yes, Charley. Would you have a room made up for a Mrs. Samantha Collins? It's only a hunch, and I hope I'm wrong, but I have a feeling she might be arriving soon."

"Righto." Charley hesitated. "There's the room we already made up for Mrs. Mills --- if she ain't checkin' in."

Mr. Best looked thoughtful. "No, I don't think so. Let's keep Mrs. Mills' room reserved a bit longer --- just in case. And --- also just in case --- put Mrs. Collins in the room next to that one. The one with the connecting bath.

"I don't like to be cynical, Charley; I try to look for the good in everyone. But when people take advantage of my good nature, I do take offense."

How Fans Kept the Torch Burning

By Susan Ramskill

Fan clubs of the 1960s can probably be sorted into one of two major groups. The first group would be the TV- or movie-studio created variety, designed to hype their own show and thus ensure its profitability. The second classification would be of the more homely type, the club that erupts from a grassroots network of fans. What it lacks in the gloss and polish of the former, it makes up for with enthusiasm and creativity.

I do not recall that **Dark Shadows** had an "official" fan club, the kind that might have been sanctioned by Dan Curtis and sponsored by ABC-TV. But I was a member of some of the unofficial DS clubs of the late 1960s-early 1970s, and it is delicious nostalgia to revisit those memories.

Before reruns and Soap Opera Digest magazine, before DVDs and VHS tapes, fan clubs were solidarity and a bid at perpetuity. They functioned not only as a gathering place of like-minded fans, but had the unspoken mission of preserving the show. If we couldn't watch repeats of DS, we could immerse ourselves in written synopses of the show and occasionally surface to news of our favorite DS performer.

My first brush with a DS fan club was one for Jonathan Frid, this one run by Betty in Modesto, California. She asked a few dollars annually for a mimeographed newsletter published bi-monthly, prints of some candid snapshots of Frid, and a classy membership identification card. I don't recall how long I remained a member of the club, except that first class postage was 6 cents at the time. And although clubs for Frid and Selby were probably the most numerous, there were clubs dedicated to almost every DS actor. I particularly recall long-lived ones for Jerry Lacy, Grayson Hall, and Lara Parker.

Likewise, there were generic DS clubs. In 1970, I joined one presided over by Patty in Thousand Oaks, California. That club offered opportunities for fans to revel in DS fellowship at places such as the Haunted Mansion in Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm. Unfortunately, fans stuck in the hinterlands – like me, marooned in Kentucky – felt left out.

I even had a brief brush with trying to helm a DS club myself. Nice membership card. But I called it quits when it became apparent that I couldn't hope to put out a newsletter with anything resembling “news” in it.

Without a doubt, however, the most unique **Dark Shadows** club I encountered was one called Dark Shadows Mascots. DSM was an unusual amalgam of club and whimsy, relying largely upon member participation. Apart from the requisite dues of \$3 annually (which, of course, brought another glossy membership card), members were required to create a DS-based “mascot.” In the words of the then-acting club president Dee Gurnett: “. . . a club is only as good as its members. That is why we require that each member create for him or herself a ‘mascot.’ Now this mascot can be anything as long as it is on a Dark Shadows theme. (For obvious reasons, however, we ask that you do not pick an actual character from the show.)”

Mascots ran the gamut from lecherous vampires (“Drac D’Arnescu”) to one who looked and behaved remarkably like a certain Vulcan character from a then-popular prime time science fiction show (“Peter Spahk”); there were witches and ghosts and gypsies and werewolves (“Collin Werenwoulfe,” “Barney Collinpire,” “Ly Canthropy”). At the farthest limits of DS-based imagination were “were-serpents,” “were-pires,” and a creature that had formerly been a computer. Each member and mascot merited a four line poem of introduction in the on-going epic poem that would be sent to any new member upon request.

Some of the mascots were of the perfunctory sort-- plenty of vampires and werewolves. But some of them were (or *became*) weird alter-egos of the members as much as manifestations of DS-based characters. In 21st century terms, we would probably call the mascots “avatars.”

DSM used these DS-oriented “mascots” to ensure the active participation of members, even if only via the “virtual space” of imagined interactions in the club newsletter. The newsletter featured regular columns “authored” by mascots: a column with weirdly eccentric advice to the lovelorn, another with gossipy “personals,” and a quasi-society page called “Mascot Meanderings,” that chronicled drunken antics and comic misbehavior.

It might be tempting to dismiss the mascots as only tangentially related to DS, as “too precious” or even as embarrassing adolescent humor. But as I review the DSM membership list, I find that although the majority of members were female, most of them were women and not girls. Indeed, at 14 or 15 years old, I was one of the youngest members. Most of the club

seemed to be 30-ish adults who relished the humor of presenting their character-avatars in such a way that they strengthened fan-bonds while fondly “sending up” the show.

DSM published a newsletter, The Crypt, that was remarkable at the time for its wit and charm. Its editors understood from the outset that they would never be able to “break” real news of real DS cast doings. They also seemed to eschew the usual newsletter reliance on DS fan fiction or poetry. Instead, the editors opted for a more convivial blend of episode synopses, wry cartoons, and reports of the interactions of the mascots.

A newsletter published even at the relatively rapid rate of bi-monthly was considerably dated by the time you got it, rendering daily episode synopses ostensibly moot. The Crypt, however, made episode summaries fun even months after the fact by making sly but affectionate asides about goings-on. For example:

“We open with Quentin kneeling beside the body of Randall, as if he had never heard of self-incrimination, Q picks up the fatal dagger, just in time to be discovered by nosy Trask, who exclaims that Q is the murderer and whips out a flintlock pistol that has to weigh at least 8 pounds...”

And:

“Melanie sees Justin’s ghost at Collinwood, moaning the lottery must be held again. It would be a rinky-dink curse if they could get out of it this simply.”

And:

“As Morgan returns from trying to force Bramwell to stop seeing Catherine (with no success), however, he does see the woman in white (we don’t – they’re saving \$ again).”

Pre-dating the earliest Dark Shadows Concordances by nearly two decades, these exquisitely complete (and often exquisitely snarky) episode summaries were a joy. And after the show was cancelled in 1971, re-reading them was a terrific way to re-visit DS in a pre-rerun, pre-VHS world.

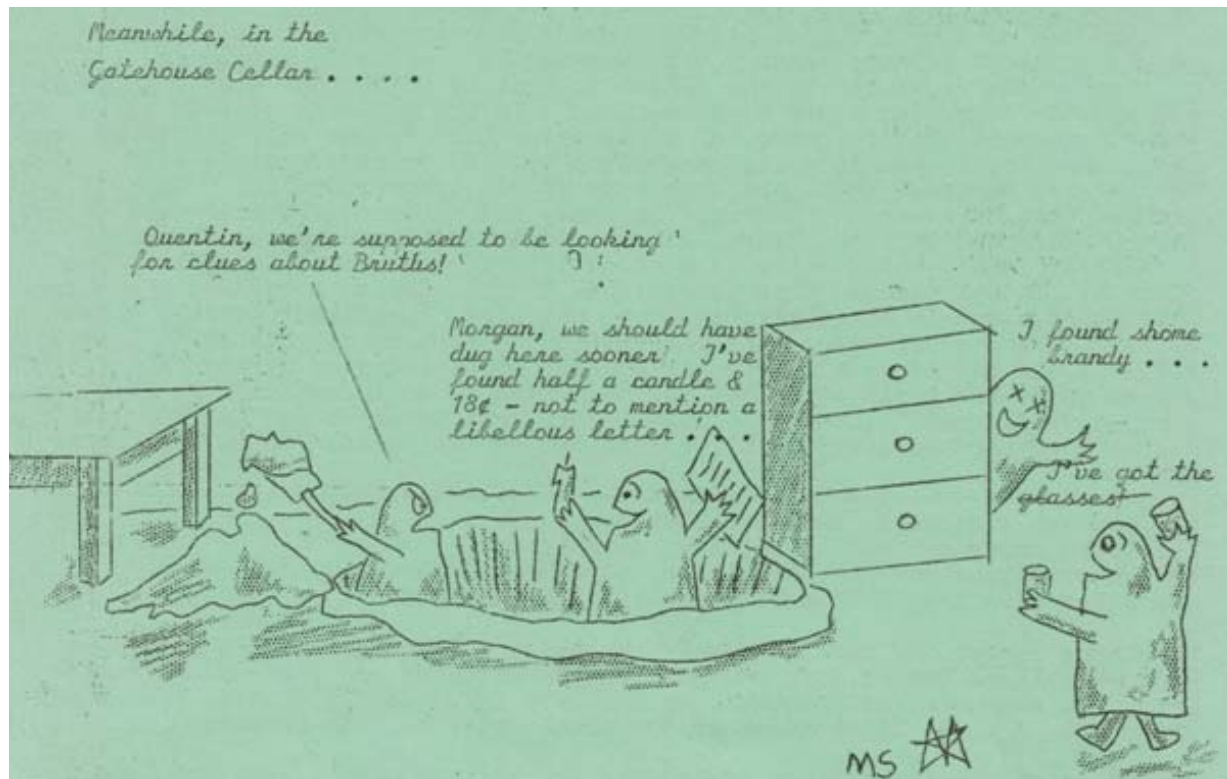
Humor was also reflected in The Crypt’s cartoons. The staff artist Claire Mason offered terrific sketches of favorite cast members in every issue, but I was most drawn to Mary Schwab’s sassy “Glob” cartoons that spoofed DS tropes. She didn’t even attempt to recreate recognizable DS characters, but just put her “globs” in familiar settings and then poked a little self-reflexive fun at the proceedings. In the 1990s, Sherlock displayed much the same kind of irreverence (but with better draftsmanship).

Current purveyors of fanzines style themselves more as publishers than fan club presidents/newsletter editors. Perhaps this is to avoid the air of adolescence that lingers over the phrase “fan club.” Perhaps it is to dodge the significant correspondence that attends keeping a burgeoning membership aligned and focused. Unfortunately, this implied “dissing” of old-style fan clubs neglects their importance in the continued relevance of **Dark Shadows**. It may seem silly now, when the perpetuity of **Dark Shadows** is so assured, but during the original run of the show, pop icons were more ephemeral. In the late 1960s, no one dreamed that a soap opera could ever go into reruns. Videotape machines were cost prohibitive and years away from private home ownership, so re-viewing past DS episodes was a daydream at most. The original

DS fan clubs should be credited with having preserved DS in the fan consciousness until reruns, VHS/DVDs, DS Concordances, and Dan Curtis re-dos could arrive.

Of the original generation fan clubs, **Dark Shadows Mascots** proved a club that somehow transcended itself. Its acting president defined its purpose as “to have fun. But since the cancellation of DS, our purpose is more than that – we want to help see to it that DS is never forgotten.”

I’d say DSM lived up to its mandate.



The Origins of Barnabas Collins By Geoffrey A. Hamell

There are certain things in popular culture that are so well-known that just about everyone takes them for granted.

For instance, ask anyone on the street and the chances are they’ll tell you that “Dracula” is the story of a sexy vampire with an undying passion for a woman he loved long ago. “The Mummy”, by contrast, was about a shambling, almost mindless monster wrapped in bandages, until the concept was rebooted by those Brendan Fraser movies in the last dozen years. Most of the general public may not know “**Dark Shadows**” these days, but they know those iconic horror characters very well.

So a lot of people must have been confused when “**Dark Shadows**” producer Dan Curtis, introducing the DVD release of his own “Dracula”, said: “Richard Matheson and I adapted the Bram Stoker novel and brought to it something that wasn’t in it. I ripped myself off.

I took the DS love story and put it in our ‘Dracula’, because in the novel Dracula leaves Transylvania and goes to England for no reason at all. Stoker says he’s virtually sucked everybody dry down there, and he had to find new blood. We didn’t do that. I always felt that was ridiculous, and we came up with the central love story to ‘Dracula’ that never existed in the novel. That has since, I might add, been copied by other Draculas.”

Curtis was not being anything but truthful here. Read Bram Stoker’s novel “Dracula”: There’s not a hint of romance, or any emotion other than malice, in the Count’s behavior toward anybody human. His nocturnal visits to Lucy spring from the simplest of motives - she lives next door! – and the minute she’s dead, he apparently forgets her completely. When he gets around to the other heroine, Mina, he declares an even-less-romantic purpose: to make those who love her suffer for opposing him. While the Count’s victims may have an erotic reaction to his spell, to him they are nothing but pawns (or disposable beverage containers).

And the vampire story on DS does begin as a fairly close adaptation of the middle part of Stoker’s tale. Barnabas Collins, like Dracula, moves into a long-abandoned mansion (with a servant who looks strikingly like Dwight Frye in the 1931 “Dracula” movie) and starts preying on a girl who lives conveniently nearby. In fact, these weeks of the series may, in a way, be the closest screen version of that part of “Dracula”! The serial format captures the slow, maddening suspense of Lucy/Maggie’s story – the gradual ebbing of the victim’s strength and life, the frightening personality changes, the growing despair as repeated transfusions and attempts to protect her prove fruitless – in a way that can’t be realized in the limited time of a movie. When Maggie’s life signs seem to fail in the hospital, and she vanishes from her room (through what appears to be an upstairs window!) to wander through the night in a zombie-like manner, we are all set to see her complete the transformation into a vampire.

But instead the story takes a sudden and unexpected turn, with a very-much-alive Maggie held captive in the Old House, subjected every night to constant brainwashing as Barnabas tries to convince her that she’s actually his long-lost Josette. Today this is almost expected; it’s been ripped off in everything from “Fright Night” to “Port Charles”. This is the biggest reason why “**Dark Shadows**” is rarely recognized as the huge influence on vampire films and fiction that it is: The elements that made it a classic have become so assimilated into the genre that people think they were always there. But in 1967, we’d never seen a vampire story like this one before. It was new and startling.

So where did the classic Barnabas story come from – the tale of dark, obsessive love? Did it spring full-blown from the minds of series writers Ron Sproat and Malcolm Marmorstein? (Even Curtis admitted that it wasn’t his idea; he initially wanted a traditional soulless villain.) Was it something completely new? It certainly wasn’t from any version of “Dracula”; even in the 1945 “House of Dracula”, which had the Count seeking a cure for his condition, his “reform” lasted about twenty minutes – one sight of a pretty throat and he was back to his evil ways.

There had been one earlier vampire film that briefly touched on a similar theme: the obscure vampire Western (!) “Curse of the Undead” (1959). This odd and cheesy little film does have the basic elements: vampire gunslinger Drake Robey sees the unsuspecting heroine, a Typical Western Rancher’s Daughter Who’s Alone and Helpless, as the image of the sister-in-law he once loved (and murdered his brother over). But this backstory is only gone into briefly, and never explored in any depth. There is no attempt to alter the lady’s identity, just a more human sort of attraction mixed in with the usual bloodlust (which in itself was unexpected enough, at the time, to draw a viewer’s attention).

For the real influence, we have to look farther back, to a much more famous movie that inspired this minor one. Yes, that's why I mentioned "The Mummy" earlier...because this movie, too, is not what most viewers today think it was. Indeed, I've heard of several people who rented the original 1932 "Mummy" and turned it off partway through, simply because it wasn't what they expected! You do get about thirty seconds of the "classic" image: Boris Karloff, awakened in his sarcophagus by an ancient spell foolishly read aloud, rising up in his moldy bandages and reaching a menacing hand toward the unwitting reader. And then it's several years later, and Im-ho-tep, the mummy, is calmly walking around Cairo posing as Ardath Bey, a local Egyptologist with a really bad skin condition. He's polite, dignified, highly intelligent, and still deeply obsessed with Ankh-es-en-amon, the beautiful princess he loved and died for thousands of years ago. When he meets modern girl Helen Grosvenor, he instantly sees in her the reincarnation of his great love, and sets out to convince her of her true identity and her destiny to be with him, and like him, forever.

This is, in fact, the one thing that makes the movie original. In many other ways it's a deliberate carbon copy of the same studio's "Dracula" from the year before, lifting not only the general story structure, but some of the same actors, the same theme music ("Swan Lake"), and even Stoker's famous "children of the night" dialogue byte! But where Bela Lugosi perfectly reflected the cold, inhuman menace of Stoker's Dracula, Karloff's Im-ho-tep is a hauntingly sad and lonely character, evil yet vulnerable and tragic. In the 1960s, this was a movie that everyone knew if they knew horror films; it had been reissued in theaters over and over, had aired on TV countless times. Watch the scenes where Im-ho-tep is messing with Helen's mind as he talks of their past and their love together. He *is* Barnabas – or rather, Barnabas is him. When Jonathan Frid mentioned "The Mummy" as an influence during a convention appearance, the audience sounded puzzled, misled by the cruder images of later mummy movies. But it's not about the bandages; it's about the character.

Before closing this discussion, there's another probable source that ought to be mentioned – one not as yet referenced by any of the DS creative team, but so obscure that one might forgive them for thinking that no one would recognize it if they did. Consider these story elements, though, from the 1845-47 serial "Varney the Vampyre, or The Feast of Blood":

Grave robbers break into an ancient tomb, planning to steal the jewels supposedly buried in one of the coffins. But when they break the seals on the coffin's lid, a vampire rises up to greet them...

This vampire, Sir Francis Varney, moves into the mansion next door to Bannerworth Hall, whose residents recognize him at once as looking just like the centuries-old portrait of the original Marmaduke Bannerworth. "Varney", their distant "cousin", is the only one who knows where the family's lost treasure is really hidden.

The estate holds two mansions: the still-occupied Hall where the family lives, and the original Bannerworth Hall, now long-abandoned and ruinous, whose basement cell holds the vampire's kidnapped captive. In a later arc, we learn that a twisting underground passage leads from the cellar of Varney's mansion to the beach below the towering cliffs.

Varney sometimes has the odd habit of biting victims on the *arm* rather than the neck...

And the list of parallels goes on... Most significantly, Varney/Bannerworth may be the first semi-sympathetic vampire character in literature. While he remains a menace (at least through Chapter 150 – I'm still working on reading the whole vast story!), he is also shown as

feeling human guilt and remorse for his wicked actions, friendliness toward his family's human descendants, and other signs of a noble and gentlemanly nature. An ambivalent and unpredictable character, he can give charity to the homeless in one chapter, and replace the money in the next by means of a brutal murder.

This long, *long* story was published anonymously in weekly eight-page installments, sold at newsstands for a penny, making it, in effect, the first vampire soap opera – and, despite clichéd characters, dragging plots, and long-winded prose, it was a runaway success, going on past its original year-long story into a succession of shorter arcs with new supporting casts and locations. In the 1840s, after all, vampire tales were still something new and fresh; the first in the English language, John Polidori's short story "The Vampyre", had only been published less than thirty years before, and had featured hardly any of what we now call traditional vampire lore. Elements that modern readers take for granted, such as the vampire's immortality and superhuman strength, would have been brand-new to Varney's audience.

In its time "Varney" was a sensation, and was collected in book form and reprinted by demand. But to most modern vampire fans, it's a minor footnote in the history of the genre, usually known only through anthologized reprints of the opening chapter (which, taken by itself, is pretty standard stuff). Though an undoubted influence on such better authors as Stoker and J. Sheridan LeFanu ("Carmilla"), it was out-of-print for generations by the time DS was being developed. Could Sproat or Marmorstein have had access to this then-rare work?

The simple answer is yes. There were certainly still copies in certain libraries, if you knew where to look. I myself browsed through one in the early 1970s – a very old, yellowing book with weakened binding, which had been sitting on a library shelf in plain sight for generations, available to anyone who looked in the catalogue under the subject heading "Vampires (Fiction)". And the more I read on, finding one similarity after another, the more I'm convinced that someone working on DS in 1967 must have found a copy, too. I believe in coincidence, sure – but that many coincidences in one story? It's a bit much...for, if it weren't for the clothes in Marmaduke Bannerworth's portrait, you'd think he was our Barnabas Collins.



Review of **Dark Shadows –The Night Whispers** By Joe Escobar

Jonathan Frid returns to **Dark Shadows** in Big Finish Production's **The Night Whispers**. The story is probably set just before the events chronicled in **The House of Despair**. Barnabas, now human, is considerably older than when we left him in 1971. Willie is still his servant and taken for granted. There's no hint that he's met his wife to be, Jessica. The line referring to "the skies turning black" also foreshadows the coming of Mr. Strix in **The House of Despair**.

The Night Whispers reveals Barnabas as we rarely saw him in the original series. In this production he's both human and intimidating. On the TV show, when Barnabas was not a vampire, he frequently spent much of the story wringing his hands and reaching out to others to solve the dilemma. This was especially evident in the Dream Curse/Adam storyline. Barnabas spent half the story being bullied by Adam, and the other half victimized by Angelique. Professor Stokes was frequently called in to try to save the day. This was also the modus operandi in the Quentin's Ghost story. As a vampire Barnabas was often rash and impulsive, but he was rarely indecisive and always dynamic. In **The Night Whispers** we get the best of both worlds, a human being who is forceful and takes command of the situation.

The story opens with Barnabas in a reflective mood, ruminating about his past and the guilt that is his ever constant companion. On that particular stormy night, Celeste, literally a ghost from his past decides to resurface and take revenge for an incident that occurred when Barnabas was a young man. Like the audio drama **The Rage Beneath** this story delves into Barnabas' past and brings to light a man who was not nearly as innocent as we were led to believe.

Frid's performance is powerful. Although his voice has undeniably altered over the years, the script accommodates these changes. He is commanding and brings an element of danger and ruthlessness that was rarely evident when Barnabas was in a non-vampiric state on the series. Quite frankly I'd be terrified to have him as an enemy.

Barbara Steele's portrayal of Celeste is also chilling. Although not quite a cameo appearance, her part in the story is fairly brief. She attacks the role as Christopher Lee often did in his **Dracula** films. We usually saw quite little of the Count, but when we did he was unforgettable and his shadow loomed over every scene. Celeste is that kind of a villain and Steele brings her to life admirably.

Last but certainly not least, John Karlen once again turns in a fine performance as Willie. Time has seemingly stood still; he has walked into the role as seamlessly as if four decades had not elapsed since his last television portrayal of Willie. Karlen gives us a Willie who is at times, loyal, passive, long suffering, and even resentful and angry. Frid and Karlen work well together and their dramatic reunion has been long overdue.

If **The Night Whispers** is Frid's **Dark Shadows** swan song, he's leaving us with style. The future of Barnabas Collins is in the capable hands of Andrew Collins. **The Night Whispers** serves as encore the audience has been calling out for all these decades.

A Review of the Soundtrack Music from **Dark Shadows-The Legend Reborn** By Joe Escobar

Dark Shadows was and is unique. Soaps that were contemporary with **Dark Shadows** generally did not have a score. Tense, dramatic, or tragic moments were underscored with an organ. There were no complex compositions to set the mood of the scene. DS has over 8 hours of Robert Cobert's brilliant incidental music in its library. Emotions evoked by these compositions run the gamut from fear, sorrow, anger, and yes, joy, even in Collinsport.

One can be excused for asking then, why did the producers at **Big Finish** choose to use their own music instead of Cobert's? True, they didn't totally ignore the past. The familiar opening pieces are there in each story. Their first few episodes utilized "Quentin's Theme" and some of the familiar Blue Whale tunes. Many of the dramatic readings rework some of Cobert's more familiar character themes. However, the new compositions dominate the stories.

Several practical concerns prompted their decision. Producer, Stuart Manning stated that it "was a difficult decision...the tracks are in mono, with varying levels of technical quality". The **Big Finish** productions are multi-layered aural tapestries and stereo pieces seemed more conducive to the new format. Also since the stories are being told exclusively in the audio medium there was "a danger that if the music doesn't vary from disc to disc, then every story essentially sounds the same". Joseph Fox's scores were specifically tailored to each story (The Collins Mausoleum #2). Finally, it's obvious to me, from listening to the library on the MPI CDs, that time has taken its toll on some of the master tapes. Flaws, imperfections and dropout's mar these masterpieces.

As wonderful as the original music was, it's been recycled many, many times. Not only was it used in DS and its movies, we hear it in all the Dan Curtis ABC horror novel adaptations; including **Frankenstein**, **Dorian Gray**, and a slew of other movies. It's also true that the music worked well enough in the MPI audio-play **Return to Collinwood**. I think the decision to make a fresh start was a wise one. Composer Joseph Fox proved himself to be up to the task.

The music in "The House of Despair" is perhaps the most similar to the original DS score. Most of the compositions in this story are brooding and haunting, underscoring the disaster that has befallen Collinwood. The overall mood is quite depressing, as it should be. Collinwood is an occupied citadel and must be reclaimed. Tinkling pianos mourn the relatively happy days of yore, when the family resided in their ancestral home. Rousing marches presage the epic battle to vanquish the evil entity.

The Book of Temptation relies more on mournful vocal accompaniment to counterpoint Charlotte Howell's tragic plight. The lamenting wailing sets a funereal mood that pervades the entire story. Of course the ominous aspects of the story are not ignored. Charlotte and cohorts from the book are as menacing as they are pitiable. The compositions shift back and forth between evoking pity and eliciting dark dread.

"The Christmas Presence" does what DS never did, celebrate yuletide season. While no actual carols are used, the music conjures up images of the season with tinkling bell like instruments. There's reliance on vocals again, with male chanting that's reminiscent of hymns one might hear in a cathedral or a monastery. The effect is a mood that reminds us of the season

without using any of the familiar carols. As would be expected, the magic of the holiday does nothing to diminish the feeling of dread and imminent peril that face the family and their friends.

The season culminates with “The Rage Beneath”, a tale about a cursed pirate ship. The music fits the nautical theme. Again, there are no familiar numbers, but the compositions are reminiscent sea shanty songs. The track that heralds the arrival of the Lorelei invites one to envisage it as it floats, pilotless into the harbor.

Fox’s compositions, like Cobert’s before him, are multilayered and complex enough to stand alone; I’ve listened to the CD dozens of times. These pieces are more than just an emotional crutch for the listener to rely upon to identify the intended mood of a given scene. They are an integral part of the audio-dramas as a whole and are also works of art in their own right. These can be found on the **Dark Shadows-The Legend Reborn** double disk set available from **Big Finish**.

Dark Shadows -Music from the Audio Dramas has just been released. In these pieces composer Nigel Fairs melds familiar DS themes with his original work. Although it’s too early for me to predict how well these will hold up for me, independent of the spoken word, I believe that they ably fulfilled their primary purpose setting the moods for each tale.



Order these and other **Dark Shadows** CDs from <http://www.bigfinish.com/>

Blue Blood

by Julie Gates

Time – 1795

Place – The docks of Collinsport

He'd already done this more times than he ever had wanted to. But he couldn't even get someone to murder him. So here he was again. Animal blood just didn't do it for Barnabas Collins. There was something that compelled him to come back to this place night after night, something about taking the woman in his arms. "Josette, why?"

He saw his prey in the mist, about 30 feet ahead of him. Her head was down, almost as if she were praying over the water. She did not so much as startle when he walked up to her. "Good evening."

She turned her head slowly to look up at him. She did not wish to speak, but even in her state, she knew some propriety must be observed. "Hello," she mumbled, only barely intelligible to either of them.

Barnabas tried to observe her eyes, but she averted her gaze so quickly that he didn't really get a good look at her face at all. She resumed her position, head down, eyes almost closed. "I don't believe I have met you, I am...Barnabas Collins."

She looked up at him again, weary of his presence already. He was going to be persistent. "My name is Esther."

Barnabas tilted his head. This one was not going to be easy! He didn't understand why he was as compelled toward her as she should have been toward him...but something was not right. "I sense something is wrong. Very wrong, from the look on your face."

Esther regarded him ruefully. For the first time, Barnabas could see, even in the light that only darted in and out, that her eyes were green. "Forgive me, Mr. Collins, for not wishing to speak of my troubles."

"You consider suicide." Barnabas hoped making the statement outright might shock the woman into speaking. He dared not lay a hand on her. She brought a gloved hand to her eyes, which teared up in spite of herself. "If you must know, yes. I wish to die, this night," she choked.

Barnabas felt compassion inside. At least that hadn't died yet! "Esther...forgive my forwardness in using your given name...tell me how this came about." She took a step back from the edge of the dock. "Maybe all she needs is someone to listen", he thought. "And that might be long enough for someone else to come along on whom I might feed."

"How much can one woman bear?" she said, almost musing to herself rather than speaking to Barnabas directly. A little louder, she began to speak again. "I received word from Boston this morning that my mother has died. She suffered from the gout for many years, and now pneumonia has taken her. This after losing both of my children to influenza and my husband to another woman. I walked in on them, Mr. Collins. I have nothing left to live for."

Barnabas felt so strange after hearing Esther's story. He wanted her to live more than he even wanted his old life back! He knew if he bit her, it would give her what she wanted, death – but how angry would she be when she rose a vampire like him?

Esther turned away from Barnabas' steady gaze. She knew deep down that he had listened to her; he'd hung on every word she'd said. On any other night, she would have welcomed the sight of someone as handsome as him. But now, she wanted nothing more than to

have the ocean take her. She had to somehow get him to leave her alone, but how? Maybe she should just make a run and jump. She lifted her skirts...

"No, Esther." He said it slowly, as a slender hand reached for her.

She jerked away. Doing her best to sound haughty, she retorted, "How dare you touch me!"

"Esther." He commanded her attention. He might not have a choice but to bite her, put her under his power long enough to get her to listen to him. He needed to tell her what death was.

She could not keep up her charade. Covering her face, she finally let tears come, tears that had waited months. She wasn't allowed by her strict family to cry at her children's death, despite every instinct and cell in her needing the release. She was so angry at her husband that she couldn't cry. She'd nearly cried when she received the news of her mother's death. "Death is all around me..." she sobbed. "Death of body and soul."

Barnabas felt then he had to take his chances with his hunger. He put his hands on her shoulders, softly drawing her to him, rocking her slightly. He remembered a few nights before, when Ruby Tate had so willingly thrown herself into his embrace. But Esther was hesitant before her hands slipped upward on his chest. He felt her shoulders rise and fall with her cries, and he pulled her as tightly as he could.

After a few minutes, Esther's tears stopped. She pulled back to look up at Barnabas. "Thank you," she choked out brokenly.

Finally he got a good look at her, and he found her lovely. "Your eyes are still so sad, so empty," he told her.

"It is how I feel inside," she replied simply. She did not try to look away. His eyes had widened, and feelings of a different sort were beginning to fill her.

Barnabas recognized this look well. "You are hungry, Esther. You are hungry for love, love you have not had in some time."

Esther rested her head on his chest, not saying a word. She hoped he would understand what she wanted. "Love me, Barnabas," she pleaded in her thoughts. "Love me..."

Barnabas' need rose up inside him. He knew if he left her, she would jump into the churning waters below. But if he stayed, he would give her a kind of life that would make her want death even more. The conflict was so great...and the consequences so unspeakable, even to one such as he. He'd already lost Josette to that kind of death. He could not lose another. He let his hunger overtake him, and he pushed the high collar of her dress away...but he would not be rough with her as he punctured her neck with the terrible tools of his undead existence.

"Ahhhh..." She sighed, and Barnabas realized she had not recoiled. He did not take enough from her to begin to make her his, but enough that he would know her thoughts. If she thought to come here again, he reasoned, he would be able to stop her. But her blood did not taste the same. Had all the pain she'd been through even affected her blood? He wondered as he let her go. He'd help her find somewhere to sit and rest, to allow her to forget what had happened; he hoped, to forget that she ever desired to die. She was drifting to sleep, and he found a warm place in the shack where he and Ben had carefully crafted plans for Josette. He knew she would be safe there.

He dared to press his still-bloody lips to her cheek as he watched her drift to sleep. "Good night, Esther," he whispered. He walked out; he'd have Ben check on her later. His walk back to the mausoleum was filled with the strangest of thoughts, that somehow, even taking her blood, he had, in fact, saved her life. What an odd feeling that something so evil could have been used for good.

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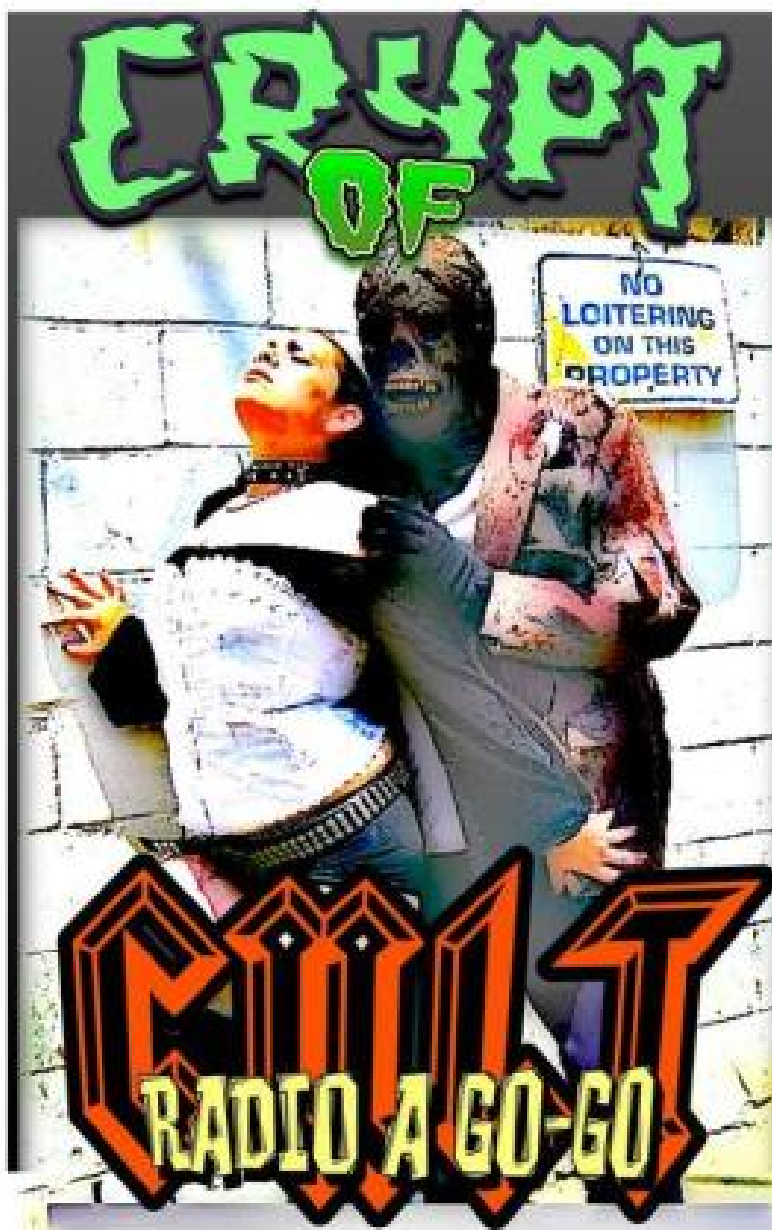


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